

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 4254

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, JO,SY, EG, US, XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH COURT CHIEF - SYRIA AND EGYPT VISITS

SUMMARY: JORDAN'S COURT CHIEF JUST SAW ASAD AND SADAT TO PROMOTE CLOSER COORDINATION LEADING TO GENEVA AND EVENTUALLY THE PRODUCTION OF AN ARAB PEACE PLAN TO COUNTER THE BEGIN US VISIT. ASAD WAS LUKEWARM ON PEACE PLAN AND INSISTED ON NEED TO RESOLVE ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, INDICATING HE WOULD NOT GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT CONFIDENCE THIS ISSUE COULD BE WORKED OUT. PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION QUESTION FOR HIM WAS NOT MATERIAL IF THIS PRINCIPLE COULD BE RESPECTED, INCLUDING RETURN OF WEST BANK. ASAD TENDS TO BELIEVE THAT BEGIN VISIT HAS MADE PRESIDENT WAIVER IN HIS PREVIOUSLY STATED APPROACH TO PEACE. SHARAF FOUND SADAT PRE-OCCUPIED WITH LIBYA. SADAT AGREED ON JORDAN'S BASIC IDEAS ON COORDINATION, STRESSED HE WAS IN NO HURRY TO GO TO GENEVA (SHARAF SAID CONTRARY TO WHAT SADAT SAID HE CONCLUDED SADAT WAS MOST ANXIOUS TO GO), AND THAT SADAT LAID HEAVY STRESS ON GETTING FROM THE SECRETARY A FULL US POSITION. SHARAF SAID SADAT AND FAHMY SEEMED VERY ANXIOUS ALSO THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MIGHT BE CHANGING OR SHIFTING HIS VIEWS AS A RESULT OF THE BEGIN VISIT. BOTH SADAT AND SHARAF REPEATED

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THEIR DIFFERING VIEWS ON HOW TO HANDLE THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE: EGYPT IS STILL FOR LINKS BEFORE GENEVA, JORDAN IS FOR SELF DETERMINATION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA UNDER IMPARTIAL INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AFTER ISRAELIS LEAVE. CLEAR THAT BOTH LEADERS ARE EXPECTING TO HEAR DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT OF SUBSTANTIVE VIEWS OF US IN DETAIL ON THE ELEMENTS OF PEACE, NOT JUST SOME PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS.

END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN I SAW COURT CHIEF SHARAF JULY 28 HE PROVIDED ME WITH EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED BRIEFING HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS IN SYRIA WITH ASAD AND IN ALEXANDRIA YESTERDAY WITH SADAT AND FAHMY.

2. IN DAMASCUS SHARAF BROUGHT ASSESSMENT FROM KING HUSSEIN OF SITUATION AFTER BEGIN VISIT. JORDANIAN VIEW IS THAT BEGIN WENT TO THE US TO ACHIEVE THREE PURPOSES: (A) EXPUNGE HIS IMAGE AS A "TERRORIST" AND BUILD HIMSELF UP AS A STATESMAN; (B) RE-INVIGORATE AND SOLIDIFY SUPPORT IN AMERICAN PUBLIC AND PARTICULARLY AMONG US JEWISH COMMUNITY BEHIND HIM; AND (3) TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD PUT ARABS AND THEIR PEACE OFFENSIVE ON THE DEFENSIVE. JORDANIAN SAID THAT ON BASIS OF BEGIN'S APPROACH AND SUCCESS, THEY RECOMMENDED TO ASAD THAT ARABS MUST DO A NUMBER OF THINGS: (A) THEY MUST AVOID OVER REACTION AND NEGATIVE COMMENT; (B) THEY MUST FOCUS THE ISSUE ON SUBSTANCE AND NOT PROCEDURE AS BEGIN HAS; (C) THEY MUST COORDINATE THEIR VIEWS ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES; AND (D) THEY MUST PREPARE AN ARAB PEACE PLAN WHICH IS FORTHCOMING AND EXPLICIT ON THE DETAILS. JORDANIAN HOPE WAS THAT PEACE PLAN COULD BE PREPARED BEFORE VANCE VISIT, BUT JORDAN RECOGNIZES FULL WELL THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DOING THIS.

3. SHARAF WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT JORDANIAN IDEA OF A PEACE PLAN FOR THE ARABS WAS THAT IT SHOULD BE BUILT AROUND FOUR MAIN POINTS: (A) FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL

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FROM THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967; (B) RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS; (C) END OF THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY; AND (D) INSTITUTION OF NECESSARY GUARANTEES AND SO FORTH REGARDING THE PEACE.

4. ASAD'S REACTION, ACCORDING TO SHARAF WAS TO SAY THAT HE AGREED WITH THE APPROACH AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO GET INTO THE ARTICULATION OF A PEACE PLAN IF EGYPT COULD BE BROUGHT ALONG. SHARAF'S CONCLUSION WAS THAT ASAD WAS NOT YET READY FOR SUCH A STEP. ASAD DID HOWEVER GIVE AN INDICATION THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR SOME RESTRAINT AND FOR THE NEED ALSO FOR THE ARABS TO FOCUS ON SUBSTANCE. SHARAF SAID HE CAME AWAY IMPRESSED WITH ONE MAJOR POINT THAT ASAD WAS MAKING. THE ESSENCE OF THE PEACE IS PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. IF THESE CANNOT BE SECURED SYRIA IS READY TO LET THE TERRITORY IN THE GOLAN REMAIN OCCUPIED FOR "100 YEARS". SYRIA DOES NOT NEED TO GO TO SOME KIND OF A GENEVA WHICH IS GOING TO FAIL; IT CAN WAIT UNTIL IT CAN GET BACK ITS TERRITORY BY OTHER MEANS. THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS QUESTION IS THE CRUX OF THE MATTER. I ASKED SHARAF IF HE BELIEVED ASAD MEANT IN THIS THAT THE PLO HAD TO BE INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID "YOU KNOW WHAT ASAD'S VIEWS ARE REGARDING THE PLO", RECALLING THE NUMEROUS TIMES JORDANIANS

HAVE REPORTED ASAD'S NEGATIVE REMARKS ABOUT ARAFAT AND HIS PEOPLE. HE SAID NEVERTHELESS ASAD IS STRONGLY WEDDED TO THE NECESSITY OF GETTING THE PALESTINIANS THEIR RIGHTS INCLUDING THE WEST BANK TERRITORY AND WILL NOT SACRIFICE THAT PRINCIPLE BY GOING TO GENEVA WITHOUT A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ON WHAT IS TO BE DONE ON THIS SCORE.

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5. ASAD WAS ALSO QUITE NEGATIVE ON THE US. HE APPARENTLY ASSUMES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOW ACCEPTED THE BEGIN APPROACH, OR IF NOT, HAS AT LEAST PULLED BACK FROM HIS OWN PAST VIEWS AS A RESULT OF THE BEGIN VISIT. I TOLD SHARAF I THOUGHT THAT WAS A MISTAKEN IMPRESSION. SHARAF TOLD ME THAT IS WHAT HE HAD TOLD ASAD, BUT ASAD CLEARLY SHOWS SIGNS OF CONCERN THAT THE US IS ALREADY WAVERING IN ITS SUPPORT FOR THE POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY PUBLICLY ARTICULATED BY THE PRESIDENT. SHARAF NOTED THE PRESIDENT'S FAILURE PUBLICLY TO RESTATE THESE POSITIONS AFTER THE BEGIN VISIT REINFORCED THE SORT OF CONCLUSION WHICH ASAD HAD ARRIVED AT. AGAIN SHARAF SAID HE KNEW AND UNDERSTOOD WHY WE WERE NOT REPEATING OUR POSITION AND HOW WE HAD DECIDED TO HANDLE THE BEGIN VISIT, BUT ASAD WAS WARY.

6. ON THE VISIT TO EGYPT, SHARAF SAID HE HAD SEEN SADAT IN THE MORNING, HAD THEN GONE TO SEE FAHMY WHERE KHADDAM HAD JOINED THEM FOR A WHILE AND THEN LUNCED WITH FAHMY FOR A LONGER MORE PRIVATE TALK. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD MET ABU AMMAR (ARAFAT) BRIEFLY IN THE QUEUE WAITING TO SEE SADAT. ARAFAT HAD CHIDED JORDANIANS FOR NOT HAVING

RESPONDED TO PLO SIGNALS FOR ANOTHER MEETING. SHARAF SAID HE HAD GIVEN ARAFAT NO POSITIVE ANSWER AND CONVERSATION HAD BEEN VERY BRIEF.

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7. SADAT WAS EXTREMELY PREOCCUPIED WITH LIBYA. HE SPOKE ABOUT IT FOR OVER HALF AN HOUR. POINTS HE MADE WERE THAT HE (SADAT) HAD TOLD BOUMEDIENNE THAT ALGERIANS SHOULD HAVE GIVEN EGYPT ANOTHER TWO DAYS TO HAVE FINISHED THE JOB. QADDHAFI WAS A MENACE, INVOLVING HIMSELF IN ALL SORTS OF SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD AND WOULD HAVE TO GO. WORSE, QADDHAFI WAS A SPEARHEAD FOR THE SOVIETS IN THE AREA AND PART OF SADAT'S STRATEGY IN HIS MILITARY CONFRONTATION HAD BEEN TO HIT THE SOVIETS AS WELL. HE NOTED THAT EGYPT HAD ATTACKED TWO LIBYAN RADAR STATIONS, ONE OF A VERY ADVANCED DESIGN WHICH SOVIETS WOULD NOT GIVE EGYPT AND SYRIA, AND WHICH WAS MANNED BY SOVIETS. SADAT CLAIMED THIS RADAR STATION WAS DIRECTED AT COLLECTING INFORMATION ALL OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN AND SPECIFICALLY AGAINST THE US SIXTH FLEET. SADAT ALSO TOLD SHARAF ABOUT PARATROOP OPERATIONS AGAINST JAGHBUB OASIS AND THE LIBYAN "SABOTAGE CAMPS" LOCATED THERE. FINALLY SADAT NOTED THAT HE GOT NO ARAB SUPPORT AND THAT THEY ALL RUSHED TO MEDIATE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY MAD AT KUWAITIS.

8. ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS, SHARAF EXPLAINED, AS HE HAD TO ASAD, JORDAN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ITS INTENTIONS. SHARAF SAID KING WANTED CLOSER COORDINATION AMONG THE ARABS AND STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF WORKING OUT ANY DIFFERENCES ON SUBSTANCE. SADAT IN TURN REPLIED THAT HE WAS IN NO SPECIAL HURRY FOR GENEVA. ISSUES HAD TO BE WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE. HE WAS IN FAVOR OF THE KING'S PROPOSALS, BUT NOTHING COULD BE DONE UNTIL AFTER THE VANCE VISIT. IN ADDITION TO PUTTING HEAVY STRESS ON THE IDEA THAT EGYPT WAS NOT RUSHING HEADLONG INTO GENEVA (IN SHARAF'S VIEW A DEFENSIVE REACTION ON SADAT'S PART TO DEFUSE EXPECTED CRITICISM), SADAT ALSO NOTED THAT EGYPT FULLY EXPECTS THE US SECRETARY OF STATE TO COME WITH A "VISION" OF WHAT THE PEACE SETTLEMENT WILL LOOK LIKE. THIS WOULD THEN BE ACCEPTED OR REJECTED OR FURTHER DISCUSSED BY THE ARABS. AFTER RECEIVING THAT "VISION", THE ARABS SHOULD THEN MEET TO DISCUSS THE VANCE VISIT AND DECIDE ON THEIR
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SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS. THIS MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE GENEVA. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THE ARABS COULD PRODUCE A PUBLIC PEACE PLAN. SADAT WAS SKEPTICAL, HOWEVER, THE "UPTIGHTERS" (SHARAF SAID THIS IS LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE ARABIC WORD USED BY SADAT), BY WHICH HE MEANT THE SYRIANS, MIGHT WELL BLOCK THE PROPOSAL FOR A PEACE PLAN. SADAT THROUGHOUT INDICATED THE OLD ENMITY WITH

SYRIA HAS NOT DISAPPEARED AND, SHARAF SAID, FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME RETOLD THE EGYPTIAN STORY OF ITS SIDE OF THE SINAI AGREEMENT. FAHMY AS USUAL WENT A GOOD BIT FURTHER THAN SADAT IN DESCRIBING EGYPTIAN EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE US PLAN IT ANTICIPATED RECEIVING FROM SECRETARY VANCE. FAHMY DESCRIBED IT AS A "BLUEPRINT WITH MAPS".

9. IN DISCUSSING THE PALESTINIAN ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM, SADAT AGAIN REPEATED HIS VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE LINKS BETWEEN THE PALESTINIANS AND THE JORDANIANS BEFORE GENEVA. EGYPT FAVORED A PALESTINIAN STATE, BUT THE CLOSER THE LINKS WERE WITH JORDAN THE BETTER. SHARAF SAID HE REPLIED THAT THE KING FEELS THE ONLY SOLUTION IS TO ARRANGE TO REMOVE THE ISRAELIS FROM THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, PUT IT UNDER TRULY INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AND THEN LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT IN THE WAY OF LEADERSHIP AND LINKS. SADAT WAS ALSO TOLD THAT JORDAN FELT STRONGLY THAT THE PALESTINIANS HAD NEVER BEEN CONSULTED ON WHAT THEY WANTED AND THAT NO SETTLEMENT WOULD STICK WITHOUT THEIR BEING ALLOWED TO DO SO. SHARAF ADDED FOR ME SOMETHING THAT HE HAD NOT TOLD SADAT - JORDAN COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT THE PLO BE IMPOSED ON THE PALESTINIANS AND THE SELF-DETERMINATION APPROACH WAS THE ONLY REAL WAY JORDAN HAD OF QUESTIONING THIS FACT.

10. SHARAF SAID THAT HE TOLD SADAT THAT THE PLO IS NOT THE OBSTACLE TO ISRAELIS NEGOTIATING, IT IS THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE OF TERRITORY ON THE WEST BANK. THE ISRAELIS ARE TERRORISTS TOO AND THE IDEA OF NOT WANTING TO NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS WAS ONLY A COVER SO THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE. I TOLD SHARAF I THOUGHT HE WAS WRONG ON THAT SCORE. BOTH BEGIN AND RABIN HAD TALKED ABOUT ACCEPTING PALESTININS IN A JORDANIAN DELEGATION
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BUT THAT THEY WERE GENUINELY OPPOSED TO NEGOTIATING WITH THE PLO UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. I DID NOT DISPUTE WITH HIM HIS CONCLUSION ON THE ISRAELI POSTURE REGARDING WEST BANK TERRITORY. HE DID NOT TELL ME OF SADAT'S REACTION TO THIS POINT, BUT HE ADDED THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE SHOULD BE SOLVED FIRST. SHARAF SAID HE TOLD SADAT THAT IF DEFINITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COULD BE AGREED BY ARABS, PLO COULD DELEGATE THE TASK OF REPRESENTING IT TO ALL THREE ARAB STATES.

11. ON SATURDAY, JULY 30, SHARAF GOES TO SAUDI ARABIA TO DISCUSS HIS POINTS WITH LEADERSHIP THERE. HE SAID THAT HIS VISIT IS MORE IN THE WAY OF INFORMING THEM THEN IN SEEKING SUPPORT OR COORDINATION. "THE SAUDIS GET A LOT OF STRANGE IDEAS REGARDING OUR POSITION". HE MADE AN INTERESTING POINT ON KHADDAM'S VISIT TO EGYPT. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ENCOURAGED ASAD TO SEND KHADDAM TO EGYPT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE COORDINATION. ASAD HAD SAID THAT SHARAF COULD REPRESENT HIS VIEWS TO SADAT. LATER KHADDAM SHOWED UP. SHARAF IN RESPONSE TO A

QUESTION FROM ME SAID THAT KHADDAM WAS IN AN UNUSUALLY
NEGATIVE FRAME OF MIND REGARDING PEACE PROSPECTS.

12. SHARAF SAID HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BOTH LEADERS A BETTER
RECEPTION FOR HIS APPROACH THAN HE EXPECTED. HE THINKS BOTH ARE
AT LEAST PERSUADED OF THE DESIRABILITY OF NOT FALLING INTO
THE "ISRAELI TRAP" BY GETTING EXCESSIVELY NEGATIVE IN PUBLIC AND
ALSO OF THE NEED TO FIND A WAY TO STRESS SUBSTANCE IN LIGHT
OF THE BEGIN VISIT. BOTH TOO ARE EXPECTING TO HEAR A GREAT DEAL, HE
SAID, FROM THE SECRETARY DURING THE TRIP, NOT ONLY ON PROCEDURE
BUT MAINLY ON SUBSTANCE. FINALLY, HE SAID THERE IS A REAL
CHANCE THE PROCESS OF COORDINATION CAN CONTINUE AMONG THE CONFRONTATION

STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA WITH A MEETING AFTER THE SECRETARY'S
VISIT TO REVIEW THE VISIT AND TALK ABOUT WHERE THEY GO IN
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THE FUTURE.

13. COMMENT: REGRET THE EXCESSIVE DETAIL IN THIS CABLE, BUT IN
LIGHT OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP AND THE HIGH LEVEL OF SHARAF'S CONTACTS,

I BELIEVE IT IS BEST TO GIVE A LITTLE MORE THAN USUAL AT THIS POINT.
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